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I.F. Stone to Suspend 19-Year-Old Leftist Biweekly

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—I. F. Stone, an independent journalist who won a wide following and financial success with a one-man, left-wing newsletter, announced today that his 19-year-old publication would cease with a farewell issue later this month.

The list of 70,000 subscribers to I. F. Stone's Bi-Weekly has been sold to The New York Review of Books, for which Mr. Stone will continue writing as a contributing editor.

"I think I'm the youngest guy my age I know," said Mr. Stone, who will be 64 years old on Christmas Eve. "But I can't be a five-day bike rider any more."

Mr. Stone, who has at least two books in mind, is slimmer than he was in 1953, when, with just over 5,000 subscribers, he started the weekly and made the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy his main target.

He has lost none of his effervescence in long battles against the war in Vietnam and economic concentration. He has actually conquered a severe hearing difficulty; there is still no gray in his curly black hair. But he no longer enjoys his own strict publishing deadlines.—biweekly since 1968 and weekly before that.

"My schedule didn't give me time to catch a head cold," he said in an interview today.

The terms of his sale to The New York Review were not disclosed, but businessmen who had negotiated with him specu-



The New York Times
I. F. Stone

lated that he settled for substantially less than his asking price of \$350,000. This represented \$5 for each name on the list that had been growing steadily and hit a high point with 2,000 new subscribers this year.

One successful bidder for the list estimated that the final price was about \$50,000, plus a percentage on the Stone subscribers who renew with The New York Review.

For the last couple of years, Mr. Stone said, he had been trying to get other liberal jour-

nalists to take over the newsletter. He was well aware, he said, that many newspapermen dreamed of succeeding him as an independent pamphleteer, "but they were afraid to take the risk."

"It's the kind of thing everybody wants to do when he gets angry at the boss," he continued, "but in a showdown it was different. You don't do this sort of thing unless you're desperate. If I had had another job in 1953, I wouldn't have started it."

Washington Reporter

Mr. Stone, who made his debut in journalism at the age of 14 with a neighborhood weekly in rural New Jersey, was a Washington correspondent for The Nation and an editorial writer and columnist at different times for The New York Post, PM, The Star and The Compass. But when The Compass failed in 1952, The Nation could not afford to hire him back.

Few expected his own weekly to prosper, but in fact, from its first issue of Jan. 12, 1953, it was always in the black and its readership grew steadily.

Mr. Stone was one of the first to challenge the American intervention in Vietnam. On Oct. 28, 1963—before the assassination of President Kennedy and President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam—he published a double issue on "Lost Chances for Peace in Indochina," warning of the wider war he perceived in outline. As

public disenchantment with the war mounted later in the decade, he found a rapidly widening audience.

Two years ago he got 5,000 subscription applications after a single television appearance on the Dick Cavett show. When The Wall Street Journal wrote an appreciative profile last year, his wife Esther, who is also his circulation manager, recalls being deluged with applications "on the finest stationery around the country."

Mr. Stone commented today that he still thinks of himself as "a man of the left—absolutely." But he is also proud to have been a prosperous free-enterpriser, "a solid bourgeois," as he put it.

"I pay my debts. I have had the same printer for 18 years. I've worked hard. I've never had to panhandle my readers," he added.

Again today he said he could not have done it without his wife, who was in some periods his only assistant. If his subscription list got any bigger, he once remarked, he would have to commit bigamy.

Mrs. Stone spoke of the transition as a beginning.

"What a wonderful thing to quit when you're on top," she said. "We both feel we're at the beginning of a new life and a new career. Izzy never looks back. He's never talked about his childhood or the past. He has a zest for life, for every new day, that I've never seen in anyone else."